

Remarks

Claims 1-16 are currently pending in the patent application, of which claims 1, 2, 7-9, 13 and 15 have been amended, claims 10-12, 14 and 16 have been cancelled without disclaimer, and new claims 17-21 have been added. Applicant submits that the claim amendments are fully supported by the Specification as originally filed, including the original claims. For the reasons and arguments set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention is allowable over the cited references.

In the Office Action dated January 25, 2008, an objection to the drawings is noted, with new drawings requested. The disclosure is objected to due to informalities, and the following rejections are present: claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112(2); claims 1-3, 8-10, and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over the Venkataraman reference (“An Efficient Bist Scheme Based on Reseeding of Multiple Polynomial Linear Feedback Shift Register”); claims 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the Venkataraman reference in view of the Distler reference (U.S. Patent Pub. 2002/0099992); claims 7 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the Venkataraman and Distler references in view of the Wang reference (“Generating Efficient Tests for Continuous Scan”).

Applicant disagrees with the objections to the drawings. Nonetheless, to expedite prosecution, Applicant believes that the replacement drawings submitted herewith, which give a label of “prior art” to Figs. 1A, 1B and 6, render the objection moot.

Applicant disagrees with the objection to the title. Nonetheless, to expedite prosecution, Applicant believes that the amendment to the title submitted herewith renders the objection moot.

Applicant respectfully traverses the objection to the Specification on the basis that the disclosure lacks proper form in accordance with 37 CFR 1.77(b). Applicant prefers not to add section headings, for consistency with the parent application. Such section headings are not statutorily required for filing a non-provisional patent application under 35 U.S.C. § 111(a), but per 37 CFR 1.51(d) are only guidelines that are suggested for an applicant’s use. They are not mandatory, and in fact when Rule 77 was amended in 1996 (61 FR 42790, Aug. 19, 1996), Bruce A. Lehman, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, stated in the Official Gazette:

Section 1.77 is permissive rather than mandatory. ... 1.77 merely expresses the Office's preference for the arrangement of the application elements. The Office may advise an applicant that the application does not comply with the format set forth in 1.77, and suggest this format for the applicant's consideration; however, the Office will not require any application to comply with the format set forth in 1.77. (See, Miscellaneous Changes in Patent Practice, Response to comments 17 and 18 (Official Gazette, August 13, 1996) [Docket No: 950620162-6014-02] RIN 0651-AA75.)

As such, Applicant requests withdrawal of the objection.

Applicant traverses the § 112(2) rejection of claim 11 because the subject matter recited therein would be clear to one of skill in the art. Without acquiescing, Applicant submits that the present cancellation of claim 11 has rendered the rejection moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested. Applicant notes that subject matter from claim 11 has been incorporated into claim 1.

Applicant traverses the § 102(b) rejection of claims 1-3, 8-10, and 13-16 over Venkataraman. Without acquiescing, and for the purpose of expediting prosecution, Applicant submits that the amended claims are distinguished from the Venkataraman reference. In particular, Venkataraman does not disclose merging n compatible vectors and then reconstructing the n vectors by filling in don't care bits using either a random fill process or a merge fill process, where selection between random fill and merge fill is based on the number n . For at least this reason, Applicant requests that the § 102(b) rejection over Venkataraman be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Applicant traverses the § 103(a) rejection of claims 4-6 over the Venkataraman reference in view of the Distler reference. Applicant submits that the Distler reference appears to provide no teaching or suggestion that would cure the deficiencies of the Venkataraman reference noted above, and thus the proposed combination does not disclose all the features in Applicant's claims. Moreover, while the cited portion of Distler generally mentions that constant or repeat-count values have been used to fill don't care bits, Distler provides no teaching of or appreciation for the selection and use of different fill methods based on the number of merged vectors. For at least these reasons, Applicant requests that the § 103(a) rejection over Venkataraman in view of Distler be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Applicant traverses the § 103(a) rejection of claims 7 and 12 over the Venkataraman and Distler references in view of the Wang reference. Applicant submits that

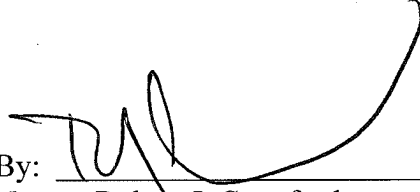
the Wang reference appears to provide no teaching or suggestion that would cure the deficiencies of the underlying combination of Venkataraman with Distler as noted above. In particular, Wang appears to provide no teaching regarding processes for filling don't care bits. For at least these reasons, Applicant requests that the § 103(a) rejection over Venkataraman and Distler in view of Wang be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Applicant further submits that the art of record does not appear to teach or suggest the subject matter additionally recited in newly added claims 17-21. In particular regard to claims 20-21, Applicant submits that the art of record does not teach ordering of merged vector sets so that the last vector of one set is compatible with the first vector of the next set, and then merging these last and first vectors to further compress the data set.

In view of the remarks above, Applicant believes that each of the rejections/objections has been overcome and the application is in condition for allowance. Should there be any remaining issues that could be readily addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is asked to contact the agent overseeing the application file, Peter Zawilski, of NXP Corporation at (408) 474-9063.

Please direct all correspondence to:

Corporate Patent Counsel
NXP Intellectual Property & Standards
1109 McKay Drive; Mail Stop SJ41
San Jose, CA 95131

By: 
Name: Robert J. Crawford
Reg. No.: 32,122
(NXPS.465PA)

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Attachment—Two Replacement Drawing Sheets